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NASSAU W. SENIOR, BRITISH ECONOMIST, IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT RESEARCHES. I

I. INTRODUCTION

About twenty-five years ago great interest was excited among students of economics as a result of the discovery of certain manuscript notes bearing upon a series of lectures delivered at the University of Glasgow by the immortal author of the *Wealth of Nations*. As far as handwriting is concerned there is nothing original about that manuscript. Adam Smith himself certainly did not write it. Nor was it written by any of his students. It seems to have been the handiwork of a professional copyist who transcribed the rough notes taken down by a faithful student of the Glasgow professor. No great value, therefore, is attached to the manuscript *per se*. Its chief importance is due to the fact that it throws some light on the origin of the ideas contained in the great economic masterpiece.

Let us now imagine a condition of "turned tables." Suppose this famous classic had never been published, but, instead of it, mere fragments thereof had reached our hands in the form of *Lectures on Justice, Police, Revenue and Arms*. Under such circumstances what rank would Adam Smith have held in the history of economic thought? Would not posterity have considered him—and rightly so—as a half-baked philosopher who was on the verge of great principles but lacked the intellectual grasp necessary to have formulated his ideas into a co-ordinated, harmonious system? This imaginary situation loses its unreality and becomes quite apparent if we change its *dramatis personam* and reflect upon the fate of Senior.

Half a century has elapsed since the demise of Nassau W. Senior, the great British economist. Such, however, has been the course of events in the last two generations that the name of this distinguished scientist has been rapidly passing into oblivion. Although he was a voluminous writer of the first rank, his works, so far as they have

been published, are becoming extremely rare; and some of the best products of his mind, strange as it may seem, have never been exposed to the light of publicity.

The author's unpopularity may be illustrated by the general demand, or rather *lack* of demand, for his works. Among the 60,000 volumes comprising the general-reference library in the Reading Room of the British Museum there can be found not a single representative of Senior's publications. This collection, however, contains two editions of Ricardo's *Principles of Political Economy*, three editions of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, and the space of a dozen volumes is allotted to John Stuart Mill.

Nor is this lack of appreciation of Senior's writings confined to general readers. The impression that Senior left on the minds of his critics is also very deplorable. One economist, in commenting upon the author's "little Political Economy," regards it as "extremely unsystematic."¹ Another critic attacks him on the score of "intellectual indolence."² A recent historian of economic theory finds himself completely disappointed on account of Senior's mental deficiency or, to quote the writer's own language, because "Senior's work . . . shows lack of constructive power, and even of intellectual endurance."³

We cannot find fault with these critics. In view of the fragmentary and imperfect premises then at their command it is not surprising that they did not arrive at more satisfactory conclusions. Fortunately, however, Senior, unlike Adam Smith, did not burn his manuscripts before he died. He left them all intact with no hard-and-fast instructions in regard to their disposition. It has been the privilege of the writer to find and bring together all these treasures, which, it is hoped, will not merely elucidate Senior's published works but also constitute a distinct contribution to the present status of economic science.

¹ A. C. Whitaker, *History and Criticism of the Labor Theory of Value in English Political Economy*, p. 93.

² F. W. Taussig, *Wages and Capital*, p. 197.

³ L. H. Haney, *History of Economic Thought*, pp. 268-69.

II. THE LIFE OF SENIOR

Nassau William Senior, British economist, was born in 1790—the last year of Adam Smith's life—and died in 1864. His father was a country clergyman whose ancestors, on the paternal side, immigrated into England in the early part of the eighteenth century. After receiving his elementary education at Eton, Senior took up the usual classical studies at Oxford. There he encountered some disappointments but was graduated *summa cum laude*. Then the problem of choosing a vocation presented itself. To study theology, of course, would have been very proper for the eldest son of a clergyman. But that implied a practical impossibility. Senior was endowed with a purely secular mind, and metaphysical speculations could never have attracted his attention, except, perhaps, in a negative fashion. He was an acute reasoner who questioned the authority of tradition and took no opinions for granted. Vague, supernatural ideas were utterly repugnant to his taste. As he himself expressed it, later on in life, “. . . I am no metaphysician, and a very ill-read moralist. I never read Locke or Stewart, or Brown or Reid, or indeed anything on these subjects, except Aristotle, Paley, and Adam Smith. . . .”¹

Of all other professions, law apparently was the only alternative for an ambitious youth of Senior's capabilities. The bar was, and to a certain extent still continues to be, the gateway to political and social advancement. But here again a grave difficulty presented itself. Distinction in the legal profession, as a rule, necessitates oratorical powers as a prerequisite. This, however, was a matter beyond the possibility of attainment in Senior's case. True it may be, as the old adage says, *Orator fit*. But before an orator can be made it is absolutely essential that he be born with certain elementary endowments that will enable him, after training and experience, to convey his impressions with such clearness, force, and elegance that his audience will be convinced of the truth of his statements and be induced to follow his leadership.

In certain respects Senior's character was magnificently adapted to the make-up of a great orator. His intellect was wonderfully

¹ Macvey Napier, *Correspondence*, p. 482.

cool and clear. No one who is at all acquainted with his writings could fail to be impressed with his close and logical reasoning. He was an iconoclast, an enthusiastic reformer, imbued with great zeal and a strong determination to substitute justice and social stability in the place of those chaotic conditions that give rise to most of the misery and wretchedness of mankind. Above all things he was a thoroughly conscientious, whole-hearted man with self-confidence and a spirit of independence that would never allow him to deviate one iota from the straight path of duty as he saw it.

But the very strength of Senior's determination and the brightness of his intellect seem to have quenched the flame of his emotions. Imprisoned in the iron ring formed by his intellectual and volitional faculties, his feelings, naturally, had a poor chance of displaying their tenderness. Although burning fervently within him his emotions very seldom produced any outer manifestations. On the whole Senior's temperament was rather cool and reserved and somewhat lacking in warmth and human sympathy.

While he was thus temperamentally ill-adapted to the career of public speaking, Senior's greatest handicap, from an oratorical viewpoint, was of a physical nature, namely, the weakness of his voice. During the cold season, especially, he was frequently compelled to be confined indoors for several weeks at a stretch, owing to severe attacks of chronic bronchitis. So serious was this vocal defect that very early in his career Senior began to realize how utterly futile it would be for him to strive for distinction in the higher branches of the legal profession. For a short time, after being called to the bar, he tested his voice in the Court of Chancery and then gave it all up as a hopeless case.

It was, however, the field of conveyancing, the least brilliant and least stimulating branch of law, to which Senior's qualifications were most admirably adapted. Long before he was called to the bar he had been practicing as a conveyancer. In fact soon after receiving his Master's degree at Oxford he was introduced by his father to Sugden (later known as Lord St. Leonards), the most distinguished conveyancer of his day, whose textbooks on the law and procedure regarding real property are still occupying prominent places in law libraries. That was a splendid opening, and Senior,

then a young man of about twenty-five, tried to make the best of it. Shortly after entering upon his profession he was informed that in six months' time Sugden would relinquish a great part of his business. He realized immediately that he stood a good chance of succeeding to his master's trade, provided that he knew enough to go about it in the proper way. He therefore lost no time and worked so hard that in six months he accomplished a task from which the average youth would have shrunk. Step by step he grew more and more prosperous until his financial position became firmly established.

Mere money-making, however, was not enough for Senior. Being now at ease himself, there originated a desire to do something in behalf of his fellow-beings, less fortunately situated. He was very anxious to make himself useful in the world, to have a hand in matters pertaining to social welfare. Finding his voice practically powerless he resorted to the pen as the only other instrument wherewith to exert his influence.

At the age of thirty-one he made his *début* in the literary world by publishing in the *Quarterly Review* an anonymous article on the "Corn Laws"—a term with much the same connotation as the newly coined phrase "The High Cost of Living." At that time England was just beginning to realize her folly in adhering to the ancient mercantile system of trade. Her restrictive policy as regards the importation of foodstuffs was made the special target for attacks from the dissatisfied elements of the population. It was no longer a one-sided struggle between the feeble, unorganized consumer and the strongly intrenched, landed monopoly. The smoke-puffing factories, patching large tracts of fertile farm lands, as a result of the great industrial revolution, gave rise to a new stratum of society, destined to become more influential than the conservative landed aristocracy. The interests of the mercantile and manufacturing classes seemed to be wholly antagonistic to the traditional ideas of the farmers and landed proprietors. New business was the aim of the former group, whereas the latter were satisfied to retain merely their *status quo*. While the cultivator of the soil did not dare go beyond the home market, the new captains of industry were trying energetically to extend their enterprises into foreign countries. But, as all commerce ultimately resolves itself

into a form of barter, the prohibitive duties levied upon imported agricultural products constituted a formidable barrier to the extension of British industry.

As is well known, the first practical move in behalf of free trade was made in 1820. In that year Thomas Tooke, in collaboration with influential business men of London, drew up a remarkable document—the Magna Charta of commercial history—which was presented to Parliament as the Merchants' Petition. In this document the policy of free trade was emphatically indorsed by the leading merchants of the British metropolis; and the arguments against restrictive regulations of international trade were lucidly summarized for the special attention of the legislators. In the following year (June 18, 1821) a select committee of the House of Commons, reporting on the "State of Agriculture," recommended the gradual abolition of the Corn Laws.

Although the advantages of free trade were fairly well known after 1776, the date of the publication of the *Wealth of Nations*, yet for nearly half a century thereafter theoretical reformers as well as practical statesmen were groping in the dark in the absence of a guiding principle by which to offset the so-called arguments of the agricultural interests. In 1815 Sir Edward West, a barrister, published an essay¹ in which for the first time was formulated the economic Law of Diminishing Returns, especially as applied to agriculture. In his article, published in the *Quarterly Review* of July, 1821, Senior elaborated this fundamental principle and contrasted it with the Law of Increasing Returns as applied to manufacturing industries. Commenting on the *Report of the Committee on the State of Agriculture* Senior showed conclusively that instead of protecting agriculture the effect of the Corn Laws was to produce widespread distress.

We believe that . . . the distress of our agriculturists is, in a great measure, caused by that of their customers, the manufacturers; that an inability in the manufacturers to buy has produced an inability in the agriculturists to sell, at its natural price, that part of their produce which has been produced at the greatest expense; and that that part of their produce is, therefore . . . redundant—that is, meets with no demand at its natural price.² . . .

¹ *Essay on the Application of Capital to Land*.

² *Quarterly Review* (July, 1821), XXV, 482-83.

. . . . All experience shows that agricultural prosperity must always be the effect of great commercial and manufacturing prosperity; all reasoning proves that it can never be the effect of measures which tend to diminish the wealth, or limit the number of consumers.¹

Interspersed among his arguments against the Corn Laws we find in this article the germs of many ideas which Senior later developed into his system of political economy. In fact this essay is a sort of miniature treatise on the general principles of production, value, rent, profits, and taxation. Even on the subject of wages Senior at that early date expressed views contrary to the popular doctrines of those days—little anticipating that many years after his death professors of political economy would impute to him theories which he, for the first time, had endeavored to explode.² In this connection it must be remarked that some of the views expressed in the original manuscript were omitted from the publication for reasons known only to the editor of the *Quarterly Review*.

As a consequence of the Corn Law agitation a group of enthusiastic Benthamite reformers, headed by James Mill and Thomas Tooke, founded the Political Economy Club in London in the year 1821. Two years later Senior was elected a member of this club, whose membership was limited to thirty-five persons. The London Political Economy Club is still in existence, and its monthly meetings are conducted in accordance with the rules originally drawn up by James Mill.

In 1825 Sir Henry Drummond, a member of Parliament, founded the professorship of political economy in the University of Oxford, and Senior was elected to occupy this chair. Some of the conditions³ upon which this endowment was made are of considerable interest. No person could hold office for more than five successive

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 500.

² Senior has been regarded as the "father" of the Wages Fund Theory (see L. H. Haney, *History of Economic Thought*, p. 438). This ill-fated doctrine, with all that it implies, has been generally considered to be the greatest drawback of the Classical School of Political Economy. A thorough analysis of this subject is reserved for a future occasion, but for the present the writer can only state dogmatically that Senior never entertained any views conforming with the Wages Fund Theory as it is generally understood.

³ Cf. the *Oxford University Calendar*, 1852, pp. 60-61.

years or be re-elected before the lapse of two years. Every professor was obliged to deliver each year a course of at least nine lectures on political economy and to print and publish at least one of them. If the professor neglected to carry out any one of these rules or failed to give public notice of the time for the commencement of his course of lectures, he thereby forfeited his entire salary, which amounted to the princely sum of £100 a year!

Senior delivered four courses of lectures from 1826¹ to 1830, the original manuscripts of which are still well preserved and bound up into book form in eight volumes.

In 1830 Lord Melbourne, then secretary of state for home affairs, requested Senior, together with Thomas Tomlinson, an eminent lawyer, to report on the effects of the repeal of the old laws against combinations between workmen and to suggest remedies for the removal of the prevailing disturbances. The original *Report on Combinations*, dated August 21, 1832, in Senior's handwriting, and also a fair copy of it, are extant at the Home Office Library in London. I have also the original correspondence upon which this *Report* was based. Mr. Sidney Webb has utilized these papers in his *History of Trade Unionism*.

At the founding of King's College, London, in 1831 Senior was appointed professor of political economy.² This position, however, Senior was compelled to resign before having time to deliver a single lecture³ in order to assume the more onerous duties of Poor Law Commissioner.

The deplorable effects of the old English Poor Laws had been occupying the attention of statesmen and social reformers since the year 1817, when the Parliamentary Committee on Poor Laws published an alarming report on the spread of pauperism. But as long as the reins of the government were held in the hands of the most conservative representatives of the old "rotten boroughs" all discussion pertaining to the amelioration of the status of the poorer

¹ The common statement that Senior was the professor of political economy at Oxford between 1825 and 1830 appears to be inaccurate.

² There is an illuminated record in the secretary's office showing all the functionaries and the original professors of King's College.

³ As regards the disposition of this unfinished lecture see page 356.

classes of the community had remained purely academic. With the popular election of 1830 the Tories were swept out of power and the liberal government under Lord Grey's administration was now ready for "direct action." A Royal Commission was immediately appointed to make a thorough and comprehensive inquiry regarding the administration of the Poor Laws and to report upon remedial measures.

Senior had been aware for many years of the evil effects of the old Poor Law régime. He had splendid opportunities for observing conditions in his father's parish. He once told his daughter it was at the age of twenty-five that he had resolved to reform the Poor Laws. In his lectures and pamphlets the effects of those laws upon the different classes of the community are given prominent consideration. The new ministry recognized his ability in this connection and appointed him a member of the Poor Law Inquiry Commission.¹

No sooner was Senior disengaged from his duties in connection with the Poor Law Inquiry than he was requested to contribute an article on political economy to the *Encyclopedia Metropolitana*, or *System of Universal Knowledge*, projected by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Published in 1836, this article subsequently appeared as a textbook on political economy and went through half a dozen editions, but it was never revised. It is largely a compilation of certain portions of the published and unpublished lectures which he had delivered at the University of Oxford prior to 1830. Considering the peculiar circumstances of its composition one must not expect it to be a comprehensive outline of Senior's matured views on economic science.

In the same year, 1836, Count Jean Arrivabene published his *Principes fondamentaux de l'économie politique*, consisting of extracts from Senior's published and unpublished lectures. Count Arrivabene, a devoted pupil of Senior, was an Italian by birth, who spent many years as an exile in London, Paris, and Brussels. In 1834

¹ Since Senior's share in the Poor Law Reform of 1834 is so important from the historical viewpoint, and since the actual facts of the matter do not appear to have been quite understood by the historians of the English Poor Laws, I hope to deal with this subject more minutely at a future date.

he translated some of Senior's lectures into Italian, and, while Senior himself was waiting for the opportunity to prepare his article for the *Encyclopedia Metropolitana*, Arrivabene undertook to clothe his professor's lectures in French dress; hence his *Principes*. This work does not pretend to be a complete translation of Senior's lectures, yet it contains certain portions which have never appeared in English print. His Introduction is made up partly of the unfinished Introductory Lecture which Senior had intended to deliver at King's College, and partly of the published Introductory Lecture delivered at Oxford in 1826. However, the greater part of the latter lecture, especially that which describes the two branches¹ of political economy, is omitted from Arrivabene's Introduction, for the reason that by that time Senior had already changed his views on the subject. He now regarded political economy as exclusively a theoretic study.² Senior has been criticized for being very inconsistent, and if a change of views constitutes an inconsistency this is a good illustration of it.

Though excellent in many respects and fairly systematic in arrangement, Count Arrivabene's French translation is an unreliable piece of work. Instead of being slavishly literal he goes to the opposite extreme by giving too free a translation; and thus all the force and individuality of the original are necessarily suppressed. Difficult discussions are omitted altogether, and comparatively hard passages are compressed in a few words. Occasionally he goes even to the extent of coloring Senior's remarks with his own peculiar convictions. Once a translator reaches such a degree of excellence, our faith in his veracity begins to dwindle away to the vanishing point.

The year 1836 marks quite an epoch in Senior's career. From that year also dates his elevation to the rank of Master in the Court

¹ Cf. Senior's *Introductory Lecture*, p. 6, where it is stated that "the science of Political Economy may be divided into two great branches, the theoretic and the practical."

² Cf. Arrivabene's *Principes*, p. 57. . . . "Le devoir de l'économiste est de faire purement de la théorie." This view as to the scope of political economy was modified later, cf. Senior's *Four Introductory Lectures*, pp. 54-55. " . . . Though I profess to teach only the theory of wealth, I do not refuse the right to consider its practical application. . . . But these discussions must be considered as episodes. They form no part of the science which I profess."

of Chancery, a position which no conveyancer had ever held before. Between 1837 and 1840 Senior's literary activities were largely confined to certain aspects of the Factory Acts, and especially to the *Report of the Royal Commission on the Condition of the Hand-Loom Weavers*. In 1841 he began to pour out his lavish contributions to the *Edinburgh Review*. Many of these articles were republished later in his collected *Essays and Sketches*, whereas a number of other important contributions still remain in an unidentified, anonymous form.

As one might have expected, Senior was not quite satisfied with his accomplishments in behalf of economic science. Consequently he was at this period seized with the idea of thoroughly revising his old lectures in order to write a systematic treatise on political economy.

In a letter¹ dated January 27, 1847, addressed to Macvey Napier, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, he writes as follows:

. . . . I feel that in writing on so many subjects I have in some measure wasted my opportunities, and that if I were now to die I should leave behind me only scattered fragments, and no great book. I have resolved therefore to write my "great book," which must be on Political Economy, as quickly as possible. If I am, as is possible, appointed Professor at Oxford next Easter, this will force me. But whether forced or not, I shall begin and go on with it.

In a previous letter,² August 18, 1846, he had written to Macvey Napier as follows:

. . . . As to the Oxford professorship I feel that I am dissatisfied with the form of my writings. They are all reports, pamphlets, or contributions. I want to put my name to a book—and my best interest is Political Economy. By taking the professorship I force myself to go over the subject again, and devote my leisure to it exclusively. And the result will, I trust, be the book in question. I have therefore said that though I will not ask for the professorship I will take it if offered. And when you consider how I am opposed to the great majority of the university in politics and in opinions, and how little I have disguised my opinions,³ you must admit that they will be magnanimous if they offer it to me, as I have every reason for believing that they will do. . . . My lectures will certainly not be a sham. They will be my book. . . .

¹ British Museum, Manuscript Department, Vol. 34,626, MS No. 563.

² *Ibid.*, MS No. 357.

³ Cf. his radical article on "Oxford and Mr. Ward," reproduced in Senior's *Historical and Philosophical Essays*.

After the lapse of over twenty years since delivering his first course of lectures, Senior was again elected in 1847 to occupy the chair of political economy at Oxford. In the interval between 1847 and 1852 he delivered five courses of nine lectures each.

In a letter¹ to Alexis de Tocqueville, dated March 19, 1852, he informs his French friend that he intends "to make the publication of my lectures on Political Economy my principal literary pursuit. I delivered the last on Monday. . . ."

Notwithstanding this resolution only four Introductory Lectures of this period were actually published. These are fairly well known. A fifth one, on "The Production of Wealth," which was published in 1847, enjoyed so limited a circulation that some of the largest libraries,² notably the British Museum and the New York Public Library, have not been able to secure a copy. Senior, however, kept on revising his lectures with the ultimate object of incorporating them into his "great book."

Meanwhile events of international importance began to stir up the foundations of society. The seeds of communism and socialism planted by the disciples of Babœuf, Owen, Proudhon, and St. Simon began to germinate among the masses of the people on the Continent of Europe; and as a consequence of this fermentation there suddenly broke forth the terrific Revolution of 1848. Great events were impending and Senior lost no opportunity of observing conditions on the spot. He was an accurate observer and had splendid opportunities of coming in close contact with the most distinguished men of his time. After that memorable year he was in the habit of recording his experiences from day to day. His exceedingly interesting *Conversations* and *Journals* covering the period from 1848 to 1863 have been published in more than a dozen volumes, and there are more still unpublished.

In his extensive travels he naturally formed numerous acquaintances, many of whom became his most intimate friends. A study of all these notables might almost comprise the social history of

¹ Cf. Senior's *Correspondence with de Tocqueville*, II, 24.

² Professor Seligman's collection and that of the Goldsmiths' Company's Library of Economic Literature (formerly belonging to Professor Foxwell) are among the few exceptions.

the greater part of the nineteenth century. Among his most intimate English friends were the Stephens', who were next-door neighbors; Archbishop Whately, Senior's former tutor, who became his warmest and most influential friend; George Grote, the famous historian of Greece; Sydney Smith, the humorist; Lord Lansdowne;¹ Spring-Rice (who later became Lord Monteagle); Henry Reeve, who for many years edited the *Edinburgh Review*; and last but not least Thomas Babington Macaulay.

Among his French friends I may mention De Tocqueville, famous for his work on American democracy; Thiers and Guizot, both famous as statesmen and historians; Horace Say and his son Léon, descendants of the renowned economist, Jean Baptiste Say; Léon Faucher, Gustave Ampère, and Beaumont.

As Senior never visited the United States his American friends were not so numerous and consisted of those whom he had met occasionally in London and Paris. Among these the most distinguished are George Bancroft, historian of the American aborigines, George Ticknor, famous for his researches in Spanish literature; John Lathrop Motley, the renowned historian of the Dutch Republic; Charles Sumner, Daniel Webster, and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

As may be inferred from his broad experience of human affairs, Senior's sympathies were neither local nor sectarian but cosmopolitan in scope. He enjoyed exceedingly the society of people of all ranks and all shades of opinion. He felt equally at home in London, Paris, or Brussels.

Senior's aesthetic tastes were marked by strict simplicity and a repugnance toward all appearances of vain artificiality. He was very fond of taking long walks with one or two of his friends and never ceased to appreciate the wonders of natural scenery, the splendor of quaint old cathedrals, and other objects of mediaeval art.

More dear to me than Music's voice
The Ocean's sullen roar,
Dearer than crowds and festive halls
Wild land gate's lonely shore.

¹ The grandfather of the present Lord Lansdowne, who was a liberal Whig and for many years an influential member of the Cabinet without portfolio.

The sentiment displayed in these lines, which in his early youth Senior jotted down while riding on the top of the Southampton coach, remained with him till the very end of his days. His artistic tastes were not remarkable. He cared very little for music and dancing, and tabooed all those popular enjoyments known as "sports." "There is never anything to be learned," he cautioned a young college student, "among what are called 'sporting men,' and their tone of thought is low. Besides that, both the sudden hope and sudden gains that belong to gambling and betting destroy economy and regulated expenditure."

French poetry possessed little charm for him, and the kind of prose written by Carlyle and company was his abomination. He lacked dramatic power. His writings are comparatively devoid of those lighter touches of the imagination by means of which some authors find it in their power to "galvanize a broomstick." In fact all the fine arts that appeal largely to the emotions did not quite harmonize with his tastes, precisely for the reason that his attitude of mind was unemotional. The reader, however, must be cautioned not to remain under the impression that Senior was a kind of intellectual automaton, for that is far from being the case. He was quite human, and, like all of us, subject to the natural law of conservation of energy. A superfluity of energy in one direction must necessarily be counterbalanced by a relative deficiency in another. An emotional state of mind, though attractive in many respects, does not appear to be favorable to the formation of sound opinions on matters involving patient and vigorous reasoning. Senior was first and last a thinker, and thinking on social and economic themes was his main sphere of activity.

Throughout life his disposition was eminently practical and marked by strong common sense. He was no agitator or demagogue. This, indeed, accounts to some extent for his unpopularity. He worked quietly but effectively. While possessing great faith in the realization of the possibilities of life, he had little or no sympathy with sentimentalists and wild dreamers whose hopes for social regeneration were grounded upon false conceptions of social ideals, or centered upon vague, transcendental ideas concerning miraculous interference with human affairs.

This point may be illustrated by Senior's report of an interview he had with Pope Pius IX on Sunday, March 23, 1851.¹ Speaking in French the Pope asked Senior whether he had news from England. Upon being informed of the tottering state of the British government, he remarked: "Dangerous times are coming—the whole world is disturbed. . . . *Tout le monde veut le bien*; but they do not know how to set about it." Senior, however, "feared that a great many people *voulaient le mal*."

Senior's influence on the practical issues of his times cannot be easily exaggerated. For nearly half a century he advocated the same principles of social justice in his lectures, pamphlets, and articles in the leading magazines and newspapers. John Gibson Lockhart cynically speaks of him as "Tutor-General of the Whigs."² Without using such pompous phrases it may be stated that Senior's influence was felt by Tory politicians as well as by the leaders of his own party.

Though a staunch supporter of Whig principles, Senior agreed with Burke that "he that supports *every* administration subverts all government."³ Always rather judicious in his political views, he was neither radical nor conservative, but combined in a harmonious manner, though of course in no perfect degree, the good elements of both radicalism and conservatism, and fought against the dangerous excesses of all *isms*. He belonged to that comparatively small group of men, scattered in every stratum of society, who may be regarded as radico-conservative.

We do not pretend to have given here a comprehensive and detailed account of Senior's career. It would have been an injustice to his memory had we attempted to condense vast stores of information within the limits afforded by such an article. In concluding this brief sketch of the author's activities we may quote a paragraph taken from an article that appeared in the *London Economist*, shortly after his death, in June, 1864.

¹ Senior describes Pope Pius Nono as "a very pleasing man of simple, gentleman-like manners, with a charming voice." Cf. Senior's *Journals Kept in France and Italy*, II, 121.

² Cf. Lang's *Life and Letters of John Gibson Lockhart*, II, 318.

³ Cf. Senior's pamphlet on *National Property, and the Prospects of the Present Administration and Their Successors* (London, 1835), p. 53.

. . . . We do not think that anyone would describe Mr.¹ Senior exactly as a philanthropist, . . . yet he was always doing philanthropic work in the most practical and sagacious fashion. We do not know that we should class him as a moralist, yet he was always spreading and maintaining sound doctrines on questions vitally affecting the moral welfare of mankind. He was no melting or enthusiastic lover of his species, yet he was more ceaselessly occupied than most men in serving them and doing them good: and he served them better than many who professed to love them far more. We are not sure that we should speak of him as especially devoted to truth in the abstract, but he was more than most men we have known devoted to the prevalence of what is sensible and right in the concrete. He hated to see things go wrong, to watch ignorance, clumsiness, or blunders. He hated folly, nonsense, or humbug. Without being precisely a genial man, he was eminently a kindly-natured man; those who lived with him and knew him intimately loved him much; he had no disturbing or unfriendly passions of any sort towards anyone; and no prejudices to pervert an intellect singularly cool and clear. Few men have ever made more out of life.

III. THE DISCOVERY OF SENIOR'S MANUSCRIPTS

In 1909 the writer attended a course of lectures on the "History of Economics" given by Professor Edwin R. A. Seligman at Columbia University. In analyzing Senior's contribution to economic science Professor Seligman characterized Senior as "the keenest thinker since Ricardo and up to Jevons." These words produced a profound impression upon my mind, and it occurred to me that the life-work of such a man might be a fruitful subject for intensive study. In the course of my preliminary investigation I found certain clues in regard to Senior's unpublished writings. It is reported, for instance, that the Webbs² had access to some of Senior's papers; and that Mr. Mackay,³ the historian of the English Poor Law, had quoted extensively from the author's manuscripts. Accordingly I determined to pay a visit to England with the express object in view of unearthing whatsoever manuscripts Senior might have left unpublished.

Arriving in London June 19, 1911, I sent out circular letters to various people whom I thought most likely to be in a position to

¹ He was seldom called "Professor."

² Cf. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism*, p. 125.

³ Cf. Thomas Mackay, *History of the English Poor Law*, pp. vii, 26, 55, 117, 144, 155, and especially chaps. v and vi.

help me locate Senior's descendants; but they could be of no assistance to me. On July 1 I started out to make a house-to-house investigation in the locality where Senior formerly lived. At last I found two old ladies who knew a certain young woman who occasionally contributed articles to the *Spectator*, and they imagined that the young writer had been in some way connected with Senior's family. I visited the office of the *Spectator* and the whole puzzle was solved when Mr. J. St. Loe Strachey, the editor of that periodical, learned of my mission. "You don't want to see that young lady," he said; "you really want to see me."

He informed me that his wife was the granddaughter of the economist and that he was in possession of the author's manuscripts. But he doubted whether anything of importance had been left unpublished. At any rate the late Mrs. M. C. M. Simpson, his mother-in-law, from whom he inherited the manuscripts, had left that impression upon his mind.

It must be remembered that Mrs. Simpson had devoted many years of her life to the editing and publishing of her father's *Journals* and *Correspondence*. Besides publishing several volumes of novels and works of a biographical nature, she had found time to write many articles in regard to her father's life and times. In fact practically all the accounts of the author's career that are now available owe their existence either directly or indirectly to this talented lady. Her latest work, *Many Memories of Many People*, written at an age past three score and ten, is full of reminiscences of bygone days. However, she did not pretend to be an economist, and consequently made no attempt at analyzing her father's economic works. Furthermore, eminent men, such as Mr. Thomas Mackay and Mr. Sidney Webb, as we have stated before, were allowed to examine the Senior papers, and had they found anything of unusual importance they would certainly have called attention to that fact. In view of all these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that Mr. and Mrs. Strachey have not paid greater attention to their collection of papers.

My faith, however, remained entirely unshaken. I knew that during his first professorship at Oxford Senior had been obliged to

deliver nine lectures each year, that he had lectured for at least four years, and that only fifteen lectures of that period had come down to us. I knew, furthermore, that during his second professorship at Oxford Senior had delivered five courses of lectures on political economy consisting of nine lectures each, of which only four or five had been published. The inevitable question, therefore, arose: *What had become of the rest of the lectures?*

In order to satisfy the curiosity of a perfect stranger, who had come from a distance of more than three thousand miles just for that particular purpose, Mr. Strachey invited the writer to come up to his house and promised to place all the facilities at his disposal so that "you can rout about in such manuscripts as we have."

As a consequence of this preliminary search there were set aside two large trunkfuls of papers—all relating to Senior—which the writer was allowed to take along to London. After spending four or five days in making a rough classification of these materials I found that important papers were still missing and went to the office of the *Spectator* in order to consult Mr. Strachey about the matter. Mr. Strachey promised that if by chance anything more should turn up he would gladly let me know about it.

A few days later I received from Mr. Strachey a most gratifying letter. "By a most happy accident" seven volumes of lectures on political economy had been uncovered. So neatly bound were these volumes that for many years no one had ever suspected them to be anything but print; now, however, they were opened and found to be really manuscript. Another volume of this set still appeared to be missing. Accordingly, I wrote to Mr. Strachey that it seemed as if Senior had left inexhaustible treasures of unpublished manuscripts and wondered whether a further search would not have resulted in the discovery of more papers. He therefore made a most exhaustive search in every corner until the missing volume was actually located. In transmitting to me his last find the editor wrote playfully as follows: "I notice you speak of the 'inexhaustible treasures,' but I am sorry to say that you have now got the whole gold mine before you."

Realizing the impracticability of copying such a large collection of papers, Mr. Strachey did not wait for me to consult him in regard

to any arrangements in this connection. He took the initiative and without asking for any guaranties or formalities of any kind was generous enough to grant me the privilege of taking along with me all the economic manuscripts. That was certainly a most generous offer, which exactly coincided with my own wishes. As for the less important materials, such as correspondence, diaries, and various other memoranda, I was given full power to make such extracts as in my discretion were deemed necessary, and returned the bulk to the editor. It is therefore evident that the materials I have brought back to this country constitute the cream of the whole Senior collection.

S. LEON LEVY

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[*To be continued*]